

14-1911

The Secretary presents his compliments to their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and wishes to bring to their attention recent developments concerning the U.S. Government's response to Ebola epidemic.

The U.S. Government is implementing measures aimed at responding to and containing the outbreak of the Ebola virus, both within the United States and globally. The safety of members of the foreign mission community, who are in frequent contact with persons coming from all parts of the world, is very important to the Department. As a result, the Department seeks to ensure that foreign missions, international organizations, and their members in the United States are aware of these efforts and the coordinated resources used to counter the threat of Ebola.

Such efforts require the participation of, and coordination by, all segments of society, including the foreign mission community.

The full range of relevant U.S. Government agencies — including the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) — is increasing every possible form of assistance to the affected countries, their citizens, and international organizations responding to the outbreak. U.S. assistance includes equipment and other essential supplies, public health messaging efforts, and technical and medical expertise.

The Department's Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) is prepared to directly assist the Chiefs of Mission with any issues associated with measures taken to prevent the spread of the Ebola virus within the United States.

Please be aware that the Department will continue to provide the Chiefs of Mission with information about measures initiated within the United States that may impact the foreign mission community. In accordance with standard practice for communicating to the foreign mission community about emergencies, the Department will use the "Emergency Management" section of OFM's website (<http://www.state.gov/ofm/emergency/index.htm>) as the primary means for transmitting such information. The OFM website contains links to additional information regarding U.S. Government efforts to help West African governments respond to and contain the outbreak of the Ebola virus.

Entry Screening in the United States

The U.S. Government recently enhanced measures at U.S. international airports and other ports of entry into the United States to identify sick travelers with possible contagious diseases, and put in place new measures to specifically address Ebola.

In response to the Ebola outbreak, the U.S. Government is conducting enhanced entry screenings at certain U.S. airports. The CDC and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) assigned representatives to each airport to respond to any reports of ill travelers, and our robust public health system is prepared to respond and assist.

For this purpose, enhanced U.S. entry screenings proceed as follows:

1. A representative of the CBP will give each traveler health information that includes:
 - Information about Ebola;
 - Symptoms to look for and what to do if symptoms develop;
 - Information for doctors if travelers need to seek medical attention.
2. Travelers will undergo screening measures to include:
 - A questionnaire used to determine potential risk;
 - Have their temperature taken;
 - Be observed for other symptoms of Ebola.

3. If a traveler has a fever or other symptoms or has been exposed to Ebola, CBP will refer the traveler to CDC for further evaluation. CDC will determine whether the traveler:

- Can continue to travel;
- Is taken to a hospital for evaluation, testing, and treatment;
- Is referred to a local health department for further monitoring and support.

Entry screening is a part of a layered approach. When used with other public health measures, entry screening can strengthen global efforts to battle this virus. To safeguard public health, this approach will be applied consistently. The Department encourages missions to share this information with their personnel and with officials who will be visiting the United States.

Exit Screenings in Countries with Ebola Outbreaks

Since the beginning of August, the U.S. Government has been working with airlines, airports, ministries of health, and other partners to provide technical assistance to countries with Ebola outbreaks. The United States has helped affected countries conduct exit screenings of departing travelers. Exit screenings are conducted at airports in these outbreak-affected areas to look for sick travelers

or travelers exposed to Ebola and to delay them from boarding an airplane until it is safe for them to travel.

The United States continues to support and strengthen exit screenings in these countries with U.S. Government personnel, protocols, and educational materials.

Additional Information

Foreign missions may contact OFM concerning this matter by telephone at (202) 647-3417 or by electronic mail at OFM-EmergencyMgt@state.gov.

Department of State,

Washington, October 17, 2014

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